



# Regent Ghana Academic Policy

## Section B

## Assessment Policy

### Principles and Guidelines for Lecturers & Examiners

<b>Category:</b>	Academic
<b>Last Modified:</b>	July 2006
<b>Review Date:</b>	January 2007
<b>Approved By:</b>	<b>Senate</b>
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*Note: This is an interim policy until January 2007. Policy implementation will be monitored throughout 2007 and reviewed in October/November.*

### What is inside this Document?

1. Introduction	2
2. Definitions	3
3. Policy Statement & Guidelines	5
4. Guidelines for Examining of Taught Programmes	8
5. Policy on Marking	11
6. Double Marking Policy	17
7. Moderation Policy	21
8. Notifying Students of Assessment Policy and Procedures	25

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 One of the University's Core Values is Excellence (i.e. pursuing excellence in curricula, teaching and social life to a standard befitting an African Christian internally renowned university and in a manner that will challenge our students to deploy and efficiently harness their capabilities, potential and intellectual capacities for social transformation. In pursuance of the goals that will help us uphold this value, the following principles and guidelines describe expectations in relation to the assessment of students at the Regent University College of Science and Technology.
- 1.2 In articulating these principles and guidelines, the University also acknowledges and accepts another core value, diversity, in relation to assessment practices throughout the institution. Consequently, where, for sound academic reasons, a particular guideline might not be appropriate, another may be employed.
- 1.3 The university also recognises that the theory and practice of assessment evolves over time, and so staff are encouraged to be innovative in taking advantage of advances in technology and changes in the field of assessment design. Therefore these guidelines should not be seen as a constraint or discouragement against the use of innovative assessment practices.
- 1.4 These guidelines establish a University Policies for a range of assessment procedures for undergraduate and taught Masters degrees. This section applies to **all** assessment, including supplementary assessments and/or re-sit examinations, e.g. controlled and timed examinations (seen or unseen) taken in the prescribed examination period, oral examinations, assessed coursework, projects, dissertations etc.
- 1.5 It is accepted that, in practice, there will need to be departures from the guidelines arising from the precise nature of the learning outcomes, assessment methods and resource limitations at departmental level. Departures from the guidelines should be submitted for approval to the Head of Department who will, where appropriate, consult the Departmental Board of Studies or the Dean of School. It is the responsibility of the relevant Dean to notify the Board of Examiners of departures from the guidelines.
- 1.6 Assessment procedures should be transparent for all of the participants, from students to External Examiners. All Internal and External Examiners should ensure that they are fully informed on the procedures.
- 1.7 Faculties and/or Departments should establish mechanisms (such as a Board of Examiners' meeting), to scrutinise assessment tasks set, to ensure they are of an appropriate standard and are consistent with the programme aims and objectives, content, learning outcomes and assessment methods.
- 1.8 Setting assessments is the responsibility of the whole department, not individual examiners. It is not regarded as good practice to rely solely on one internal examiner for the setting of assessments.
- 1.9 External examiners should be sufficiently involved in the scrutiny of assessment tasks to enable them to fulfil their primary role in assuring the academic standards of programmes of study. To facilitate this, they should be supplied with all of the relevant information relating to aims and objectives, contents, anticipated learning outcomes, assessment methods, marking criteria and any model answers.

- 1.10 It is helpful at the outset to be clear exactly what we mean by the various terms used to describe marking and other forms of moderation, as outlined in this document and several others.

## 2. Definitions

- 2.1 **Assessment** - a term for a set of processes that measure students' learning, skills and understanding measure what students know (knowledge) and are able to do (skills) in relation to identified learning outcomes at specific point during their course of study.
- 2.2 **Validity** - the extent to which assessment tasks fulfil their intended purposes, i.e. assessing fairly what the tasks are intended to assess, and the extent to which the tasks guide and motivate student learning.
- 2.3 **Reliability** - relates to the consistency and dependability of the information from an assessment task. Reliable assessment information is that which is not influenced by extraneous factors, such as, a poorly designed assessment task, and variations and/or bias in marking.
- 2.4 **Formative assessment** – This method is generally carried out throughout a course or project. It is used to aid learning and therefore sometimes referred to as educative assessment It is generally carried out during a course with the intention of guiding the student's next steps and encouraging deeper engagement with a course. Examples of formative assessment include work which receives written comments or feedback from the marker. This type of assessment would not necessarily be used for grading purposes.
- 2.5 **Diagnostic assessment** is a common form of formative assessment. This type measures a student's current knowledge, attributes and skills for the purpose of identifying a suitable pathways of learning or learning difficulties that require support and resolution. Self-assessment is one form of diagnostic assessment which involves students assessing themselves.
- 2.6 **Summative assessment** – to determine the achievement or failure in respect of a student's performance in relation to stated objectives. This method is used to measure learning which has already taken place. They are generally carried out at the end of a course or project. Thus, these assessments are typically used to determine students' final course grade.
- 2.7 **Learning outcome** - a statement which clearly identifies the knowledge, skills and/or understanding that a student will be able to demonstrate as a result of successfully completing part of a course. Learning outcomes reflect the achievement of course objectives.
- 2.8 **Moderation** - the team teaching on a particular module each mark work independently. There is then a meeting of the team to review the marks and comments for consistency. This meeting could include a certain amount of second marking or it could result in a decision to carry out some second or double marking if there was a perceived need. Methods of moderation include:
- 2.8.1 Sampling, either by an external examiner or by an internal second marker;
- 2.8.2 Additional marking of borderlines, firsts and fails;

- 2.8.3 Additional marking where there is significant disparity between the different elements of assessment for an individual student, in a unit or across the programme;
- 2.8.4 Additional marking where there is significant disparity between the marks of different markers in a particular unit or programme;
- 2.8.5 Numerical scaling.
- 2.9 A **moderator** is a person of academic and/or professional standing who ensures that assessment tasks are valid, reliable, fair and manageable both within a course and between courses. A moderator assists in maintaining high quality standards by providing advice to the course lecturer, but may not change course grades. Moderators may be either internal or external to the institution.
- 2.10 **Team Marking** - Where a piece of work has been team marked (as may be the case in sectionalised examination scripts), the scripts should be second marked by one person scrutinising the paper as a whole.
- 2.11 **Double marking** - student work is marked first by an assessor and then a second assessor will also assign a mark and provide comments. It is advisable for each marker to keep a record of all marks awarded and to make his/her own notes to indicate the rationale for awarding each mark.
- 2.12 **Second marking** - the work is marked by the first assessor who provides comments as above. A second assessor then reviews the mark and the comments and initials the coursework or exam script to show they agree with the proposed mark and comments.
- 2.13 **Anonymous marking** - The identity of students is not revealed to markers and/or the Board of Examiners.
- 2.13 **Mark:** An examination mark is the numerical value by which an Examiner assesses the performance of an examination candidate. Such a mark is on a scale 0-100 in accordance with the criteria specified.
- 2.14 **Final Marks** - All marks must be resolved internally before samples of work are forwarded to External Examiners.
- 2.15 **Marking criteria:** the learning outcome knowledge, understanding and skills requirements that are taken into account in awarding assessment marks.
- 2.16 **Marking scheme:** a detailed structure for assigning marks where a specific number of marks is given to individual components of the answer.
- 2.17 **Model answer:** the examiner's perception of what an answer should be, made available to and moderated by the external examiner.
- 2.18 **Results** - The term 'results' covers the range of formulations currently used in the University to reflect the outcome of examinations.

2.19 An **External Examiner** is appointed from outside the Department/School or institution to examine student work, particularly at postgraduate level. An external examiner may be required to recommend a grade, or contribute to the recommendation of a grade.

2.20 An **Internal Examiner** is appointed from inside the Department/School or institution to examine student work. An external examiner is required to recommend a grade.

2.21 **Boards of Examiners** - The term 'Boards of Examiners' refers to those departmental or faculty groups, normally including external examiners, which meet to agree results for units at each stage in the degree, including for the final degree classification.

### **3. Policy Statement & Guidelines**

3.1 In order to be valid, fair and reliable, assessment at the Regent University College of Science and Technology is guided by the following principles. Staff at the Regent University College of Science and Technology must be mindful of these principles when they plan, implement and review assessment tasks and assessment processes.

The following section seeks to set in place University assessment practices and procedures which are valid, reliable, fair, manageable and transparent.

#### 3.2 Staff Development

3.2.1 All teaching staff should receive a copy of this assessment document before beginning teaching and assessment duties.

3.2.2 Departments/Schools should ensure that all faculty members receive appropriate guidance and training related to the marking of student work before marking is undertaken.

3.2.3 Each year, the Academic Office should provide opportunities for new and established academic staff to discuss assessment practices and enhance their assessment skills and procedures in line with the provisions of this document.

#### 3.3 Assessment Design

##### 3.3.1 Procedures for approving and reviewing assessment practices

- i. The principles and guidelines outlined in this document must be considered as part of the course approval or review process. This activity should occur at Departmental/School and university levels.
- ii. It is expected that proposals for new courses include information about learning outcomes, together with a rationale for the proposed assessment procedures in light of these outcomes.
- iii. The Academic Office reports annually on various aspects of assessment at the Regent University College of Science and Technology. Summary reports are sent to the Academic Committee and to each Department/School included in the analysis. These Academic Office reports should be used as a significant source of information during course reviews.

### 3.3.2 Relative weightings given to different learning outcomes and each assessment task

- i. Assessment in all courses should give substantial weighting to deep learning - that is, the development of conceptual understanding and skills in applying knowledge to new situations - while not neglecting to give credit for learning core factual material.
- ii. The weightings given to different assessment tasks should be selected by the examiner to best describe students' capabilities and performance at the end of the course, and should be related to the amount of work involved in each task and the relative importance of each learning outcome.

### 3.3.3 Timing of Assessment and Student Workload

3.3.4 The number of assessment tasks counting towards a final course grade should not exceed School guidelines.

3.3.5 There should be at least four weeks between the setting of any major assignment or essay topic and the due date.

3.3.6 Students should be given early information about the requirements of graded assessment tasks so that they can plan their course work alongside their other commitments.

## 3.4 Assessing Student Performance

### 3.4.1 Grading student performance

- i. Final course grades should indicate students' capabilities and performance at the end of the course, through an accumulation of appropriate evidence from course work and/or final examination.
- ii. Grades should be awarded only on the basis of demonstrated achievement in the task being assessed.
- iii. It is expected that the grading scale will be consistent within a Department/School and that examiners will adhere to their Department/School grading scale.

### 3.4.2 Feedback on course work

If students are to gain maximum benefit from assessment they need feedback which is timely, sufficiently detailed and constructive.

- i. Test scripts and other items of course work (other than final tests or final reports) must be returned to students, normally within four weeks of the date of the test, or within four weeks of the date on which they were submitted. The work will be accompanied by sufficient oral or written feedback to allow the students to form an accurate appraisal of their performance. If possible, all course work should be returned to students before the final examination or test so that feedback may be utilised in revision for the final exam or test.

- ii. Where two or more assessment tasks in a course are similar in nature and intended to count towards the final course grade, sufficient time should be allowed between due dates for feedback from the earlier task to be incorporated into the later task.
- iii. In addition to receiving a mark or grade, students should, where appropriate, receive an indication of the strengths and weaknesses of their work, normally accompanied by guidance on how to perform the task or a similar task better (this could be in the form of student-specific comments, a model answer and/or a general commentary on common errors demonstrated by the class).
- iv. Students should be provided with an indication of the distribution of results for the class when each assessed item is returned.

### 3.5 Assessment of group work

Performance in group tasks is an acceptable component of student course grades. The percentage contribution from group tasks should be related to the learning outcomes of the course. Before individual grades are finalised, the lecturer(s) should seek and take account of additional information about the contributions of individuals to team efforts, particularly if group tasks contribute significantly towards the final course grade.

### 3.6 Assessment of oral and performance achievement

In the case of a formal test or examination based on an oral or performance presentation, two examiners, or an examiner and an independent witness, should be present. A video camera may be substituted for an independent witness.

### 3.7 Academic integrity

3.7.1 It is of critical importance that examiners are assured that the work being assessed is the work of the student to whom credit will be given. Therefore staff must provide students with clear guidelines as to what constitutes academic dishonesty, particularly in relation to plagiarism, and what actions are taken in the event of academic dishonesty being suspected. It is the responsibility of staff to ensure that the consequences and implications of academic dishonesty are explained to students.

3.7.2 As regards academic misconduct, information on what constitutes academic misconduct in respect of assessment (including clear definitions of plagiarism, collusion, cheating, impersonation and the use of inadmissible material) should be presented in departmental handbooks together with specific guidance on the consequences of such misconduct.

### 3.8 Academic grievances and disputes about assessment

3.8.1 Students with concerns about assessment processes should be advised to speak with the relevant lecturer. If the matter cannot be resolved, then the student should discuss the matter with the Head of Department/School and thereafter follow the procedures outlined in the University Academic Appeals Procedures.

3.8.2 Departments/Schools and Faculties should have committees, with student representation when appropriate, to provide a mechanism for monitoring, reviewing and resolving problems in relation to assessment, including the timing of assessment and student workload.

### 3.9 Types of assessment

3.9.1 These guidelines are concerned with all forms of assessment. Three particular types of assessment are covered: diagnostic (identifying student abilities and skills); formative (i.e. part of the student's learning process); and summative (e.g. used as part of the final degree classification) assessment.

3.9.2 A wide range of types of work can form the basis for assessment and a range of assessment methods is available.

3.9.2 Different forms of assessment can (and where appropriate should) be used to test different types of skills.

3.9.3 Departments need not employ all of the forms of assessment. The range should be sufficient to enable the full spectrum of knowledge and skills (both subject specific and generic) embodied in the programme aims and objectives to be assessed individually or cumulatively in an appropriate way.

- (i) It is an acceptable practice in Regent Ghana to rely on at least two forms of assessment within a programme.
- (ii) Programme aims and objectives, curriculum design, teaching and learning methods, and learning outcomes should be integrated with appropriate types of assessment in order to achieve an overall coherence.

## 4. Guidelines for Examining of Taught Programmes

### 4.1 Board of Examiners

4.1.1 All assessed work of 300 – 400 level should normally be capable of being independently moderated and made available in case it needs to be moderated by the external examiner(s).

4.1.2 Boards of Examiners should determine the range of assessed material and, where appropriate, the evidence relating to the award of marks for that assessed work that will be subject to moderation. The external examiner has the right to see all degree examination scripts and any other work that contributes to the degree result. In those cases where it is agreed with the external examiner that only a selection of scripts is to be seen by him or her, the principles for such selection should be agreed in advance. The selection should normally include all examination scripts and other assessed work that contributes to the degree results of candidates assessed internally as borderline, first class, third class, or failures. Where practical, in addition to marks, student work should be available to the meeting of Boards of Examiners.

4.1.3 Boards of Examiners should establish guidelines concerning the range of scripts that External Examiners should sample as part of the moderation process and which scripts should be brought specifically to the attention of the External Examiners. For example, External Examiners might be asked to look at all Fail, First Class and borderline papers. Where internal double marking takes place Externals should be asked to adjudicate on disagreements between internal examiners.

- 4.1.4 Boards of Examiners should determine which elements of the formative work that is also used for summative purposes should be subject to moderation and should establish a mechanism to verify the authenticity of that work (i.e. the students work as it was submitted).
  - 4.1.5 Where formative work is also used for the purposes of summative assessment (as in the case of coursework), departments should have in place a system that ensures students' work is available for moderation, by a means that ensures the marked work is identical to that originally submitted.
  - 4.1.6 Students should be informed at the outset of their degree studies and at the beginning of each academic year of any obligation to make available assessed work which might be required for the purpose of moderation.
- 4.2 Roles of the External and Internal Examiners and the Departmental/School Examinations Officer
- 4.2.1 All Examiners are subject to the University Guidelines for Examining of Taught Programmes.
  - 4.2.2 The internal examiner(s) is/are normally the person/people responsible for marking a student's work in the relevant unit. The names of all internal examiners should be submitted to the relevant Faculty Board. Internal examiners are expected to attend the meeting(s) of the relevant Board of Examiners. Each Faculty Board should have a policy on quoracy of its Boards of Examiners.
  - 4.2.3 The departmental or school examinations officer should be appointed by the Head of Department/School. His/her role is that of organiser and co-ordinator of the department's assessment processes, from the preparation of examination papers provided by internal examiners to the accurate recording of examination marks and their presentation to the Board of Examiners.
  - 4.2.4 Either an internal examiner or the examinations officer should be nominated by the Head of Department to take responsibility for liaising with the external examiner. It must be clear to all concerned who will undertake this contact role.
  - 4.2.5 The examinations officer should identify marginal/borderline candidates and inform External Examiners in advance of the Board.
  - 4.2.6 An External Examiner should only change a mark awarded to an individual candidate where he/she has been invited by a Board of Examiners to consider a mark for an individual candidate, or where there is disagreement between two internal markers about the mark to be awarded, or where he/she has seen all the scripts for the course in question. An External Examiner may, however, ask that the marks for all candidates for a course be systematically adjusted where, having seen either all scripts or a sample of scripts, he/she considers this to be appropriate.
  - 4.2.7 In the case of a disagreement on the mark to be awarded for a particular course between two independent Internal Examiners, the dispute shall be referred to the appropriate External Examiner, as designated by the Chair of the Board of Examiners, for resolution.
  - 4.2.8 The External Examiner has the right to see all work submitted for assessment except

for work submitted for courses within Honours degree programmes for which the marks obtained do not contribute to the Honours classification and should see at least a selection of such work. In those cases where it is agreed that the Chair of the Board of Examiners should make a selection of scripts to be seen by an External Examiner, the principles for such selection should be agreed in advance.

- 4.2.9 Where a selection is made, External Examiners should normally see all scripts of borderline cases, those assessed internally as of first class honours standard or failures, and a reasonable sample of scripts from the top, the middle and the bottom of the range.

### 4.3 External Examiners' Reports and Minutes of Boards of Examiners

- 4.3.1 Heads of Department/chairs of Boards of Examiners should be responsible for conveying the contents of External Examiners' Reports to their departments as part of an on-going process of assessment review. The matter should appear as an item on the agenda for a subsequent departmental or Examiners meeting and a record of any agreed alterations in assessment practices must be kept. External Examiners should be given formal written feedback on the discussion of their Reports and consequent changes in assessment practices.
- 4.3.2 Minutes of Boards of Examiners should record adequate details of the discussion of borderline cases and where individual medical or other extenuating circumstances are presented. A record should be kept of how any decisions were taken - i.e. by consensus or vote. Where the Board of Examiners is not the Faculty Board the minutes should be reported (as an agenda item) to the relevant Faculty Board.
- 4.3.3 It is the responsibility of the Board of Examiners to draw the Faculty Board's attention to issues it wishes to raise.

### 4.4 Policy Regarding Ill Students

- 4.4.1 If the student claims to have been adversely affected by illness, he or she should submit a written report from an appropriately qualified medical practitioner to the Chairman of the Board of Examiners before the meeting of the Board at which the student's examination performance is to be considered.
- 4.4.2 Students should be informed about the procedure that will be used to process any evidence that they do provide. This includes who the information will be disclosed to and how it will be stored. Departments should ensure that their procedures are arranged so the number of copies of the information is kept to a minimum. Where confidentiality is requested by the student, this should be respected.
- 4.4.3 Evidence submitted by students must be considered by a Board of Examiners or other appropriate nominated group. The Board or nominated group should establish a procedure, whereby medical or other circumstances which might influence a student's final classification are brought to the attention of the External Examiners and dealt with at the Board in an appropriate way. Departments may wish to consider utilising a small group to scrutinise such evidence and make appropriate recommendations to the Board of Examiners.

- 4.4.4 A record of the consideration of medical or other evidence at any stage of the student's progress and the outcomes agreed must be kept.

## **5. Policy on Marking**

### 5.1 General Principles

- 5.1.1 All examination scripts resulting from timed unseen examinations shall be anonymous for the purpose of marking. Candidates will be assigned random examination numbers in advance of the examinations and answer scripts will be identified by candidate number only.
- 5.1.2 Candidates names and examination numbers shall be known to Boards of Examiners when considering medical and other concessionary evidence, and when considering the overall performance of candidates.
- 5.1.2 Candidates names but not their examination numbers shall be known to the Examiner at oral examinations except that the External Examiner may be informed of both candidate's name and examination number.
- 5.1.3 For each student and each course the outcome of assessment shall be recorded as a mark out of 100 except where it is agreed that a course shall be assessed on a pass/fail basis.
- 5.1.4 Where an Internal Examiner considers a script to be illegible the case must be to the second marker or moderator, who will act as arbiter. If the second marker or moderator agrees that a script is illegible, the script may:
- (i) be awarded a mark of zero, or
  - (ii) be transcribed at the candidate's expense and under conditions laid down by the School. The transcript will be used alongside the script in marking.
- 5.1.5 For each course, except for courses within Honours degree programmes for which the marks obtained do not contribute to the Honours classification, and for each student, at least 80 per cent of the work required for assessment must be marked either by two Internal Examiners or by one Internal Examiner subject to moderation by a second Internal Examiner in accordance with the requirements. Level 300-400 courses shall be moderated by external examiners. Marking arrangements shall be made explicit by the Department or by the School.

### 5.2 Marking criteria

- 5.2.1 Explicit marking criteria (i.e. the broad learning outcome knowledge and skills requirements which are taken into account in awarding assessment marks and which form the basis for the determination of the final degree classification) are necessary in order to enable consistent standards of marking and judgement to be maintained. They can also provide students with a clear statement of what is expected of them and provide guidance on how performance can be improved.
- 5.2.2 Each School should establish generic marking criteria relating to the classification of

degrees. School marking criteria should be supplemented at the level of individual programmes and/or units, to reflect discipline specific learning outcomes. Marking criteria should take into account the subject benchmarks set by relevant collaborative partners and mentor institution of Regent Ghana.

5.2.4 Marking criteria should be made available to both staff and students, and specified in departmental and/or unit handbooks.

5.2.4 Marking criteria are different from model answers and more prescriptive marking schemes which (for example) assign a fixed proportion of the assessment mark to particular knowledge, understanding and/or skills.

5.2.5 Boards of Examiners should determine whether the extent to which the marking criteria are satisfied can vary between individual candidates, whether a candidate's strengths in one area can offset shortcomings in another and whether consideration should be given to factors such as differences of approach, style and interpretation.

### 5.3 Significance of marking

Marking provides a judgement of how well students have completed an assessment task. The resulting marks are then used for feedback, for formative and summative assessment, and for decisions on progression and awards. The present document is directed towards summative assessment. Two aspects of marking is very significant here. The first is whether marks are awarded fairly and consistently. The other aspect is whether the absolute marks are appropriate. This aspect is ultimately handled by External Examiners in their review of marking standards and moderation where appropriate. This section deals with the former aspect.

### 5.4 Marking Guidelines

The following percentage marks shall be used in relation to the marking of individual courses within Honours degree programmes and for which the marks obtained contribute to the Honours classification except where it is agreed that a course is to be assessed on a Pass/Fail basis only. All courses are assessed according to the common University scale:

Mark Range	Descriptive Equivalent	Classification
70 and above (A)	<b>Excellent.</b> An outstanding answer in the context of course/topic aims and objectives with respect to: synthesis of material, innovative use of material, originality and critical ability. Demonstrates thorough understanding of topic with wide evidence of additional study and outstanding communication and presentation skills.	First Class Honours
60 – 69 (B)	<b>Very good.</b> A full answer to question with thorough understanding of topic, substantial detail supported by reasoned argument, with evidence of further study. Very good communication and presentation skills.	Upper Second Class Honours
50 – 59 (C)	<b>Good.</b> A full answer to question with a satisfactory understanding of topic, substantial detail supported by reasoned argument, with evidence of further study. Good communication and presentation skills	Lower Second Class Honours
40 – 49	<b>Basic.</b> Some understanding of basic material. Omission of much relevant material. Use of irrelevant material. Poor	Third Class Honours

(D)	communication and presentation.	
Fail	<b>Fail.</b> Fails to satisfy the minimum standards set by course/topic aims and objectives. Many factual errors and omissions. Very poor communication and presentation skills.	Below 40

## 5.5 Unfinished Examination Scripts

5.5.1 Where the required number of questions on an examination paper has not been answered, the questions answered should be marked and the examiner should indicate how many questions have been answered. A mark of zero should be recorded for any missing answer and the overall mark for the paper determined in the normal way. The attention of the External Examiner, where appropriate, and the Board of Examiners should be drawn to such cases by the annotation of a 'u' (unfinished) against the mark given.

5.5.2 Where a question has been started but not completed, the examiner should use discretion in judging whether the answer deserves to be marked. If a mark is awarded for the question, the mark should take account of the fact that the answer has not been completed and the overall mark for the paper should be determined in the normal way. Such a paper should not be distinguished by the annotation 'u'.

## 5.6 Failure to Sit an Examination

In the case of failure to sit an examination or submit an extended time examination paper or an extended essay which has the status of a full paper by the deadline notified, without due cause, the candidate shall be regarded as having missed the examination, and an examination mark of zero will be awarded.

### 5.6 Marking

5.6.1 Anonymous marking should be employed wherever practicable. Where anonymous

5.6.2 marking is not practicable, departments should justify their practice as a departure from these guidelines.

5.6.3 The less prescriptive the assessment (i.e. the lower the expectation of conformity to a model answer), the more necessary it is to ensure an effective moderation strategy.

5.6.4 The University recognises that in the case of summative assessment, some examination boards will choose to adopt double marking as academically desirable.

5.6.5 Marks on classification borderlines (49, 59 etc.) should be avoided or awarded purposefully. Each Faculty should have a clear policy on whether or not borderline marks may be used and whether this policy applies to elements, units or programmes, or combinations of the three. If borderline marks *are* awarded, their status as raisable marks at each level of assessment must be defined.

5.6.6 Detailed marking criteria for: assessed group work and peer (student) assessment, should be established and made available to students and examiners.

## 5.7 Standardisation of marks

Weighting of course marks will follow the weighting published in the Course Outline. Where pieces of work are double-marked the assessors should discuss the marks and agree an average mark.

## 5.8 Guidelines for re-marking

- 5.8.1 All requests for re-marking of exams must be handled officially. Therefore, it is important that you do **not** accept requests for re-marking directly from students, but direct them to their Departmental Examinations officer.
- 5.8.2 All re-marking is done anonymously.
- 5.8.3 Within a few weeks of the exam results being published, you may receive one or more scripts for re-marking, each with a reply sheet.
- 5.8.4 You (rather than a moderator) re-mark your own exams, using the same marking scheme etc. that you used originally.
- 5.8.5 You only re-mark the answers for the students who have officially requested re-marking (not all of them, or even a sample of them).
- 5.8.6 If you identify any discrepancy of more than 5% (e.g. 3/60) in the paper overall - either increasing or reducing the mark - then the marks for that student should be officially changed.
- 5.8.7 Whether the marks should be changed or not, you should fill in and return each reply sheet with the question books etc. to the departmental office as soon as possible.

## 5.9 Processing Assessment Marks

- 5.9.1 A designated member of the Board of Examiners must take responsibility for overseeing the processing of marks at all stages of the assessment procedure.
- 5.9.2 Procedures at departmental level must be established to enter and check the marks for each individual piece of assessed work which form the basis for Examiners' Meetings.
- 5.9.3 Back-up systems should be put in place when electronic storage and transmission systems are in operation.

## 5.10 Disclosure of Marks and Results

- 5.10.1 No marks that contribute to examination results should be disclosed to students unless they have been agreed by Boards of Examiners or are clearly identified as provisional.
- 5.10.2 In order to maximise learning opportunities, it is good practice to provide students with feedback on assessed work. Feedback on diagnostic and formative assessment should provide students with a clear idea of how their performance can be improved in the future. Guidance should be given on both the academic content and the presentation of that content.

- 5.10.3 All formatively assessed work should be returned according to a declared schedule. The department should have a mechanism for auditing adherence to this schedule.
- 5.10.4 Markers are reminded that students have a right to see all marks and written comments made about work submitted including, but not limited to, marks and comments on examination scripts.
- 5.10.5 No results contributing to the award of the final degree should be published. To obtain a breakdown of the results contributing to the award of the final degree, students should be directed to consult designated staff as soon as possible following the meeting of the Board of Examiners.
- 5.10.6 Examination results other than results contributing to the award of the final degree may be published on departmental noticeboards or websites at the discretion of the relevant department(s).
- 5.10.7 The anonymity of the student must be protected in the publishing of marks and results on departmental noticeboards or websites. All assessment marks published by Departments should be identified by a candidate's University number rather than by name except where explicit provision has been made for variance from this practice.
- 5.10.8 Departments should arrange for designated staff to be available on the next working day/two days following the meeting of the Board of Examiners to advise students of the results agreed by the Board of Examiners for individual papers or units and, where appropriate, whether the Board of Examiners took account of any extenuating circumstances. Publication of degree classification results on website (electronic campus) must precede any communication of marks by Departments.
- 5.10.8 Designated staff should also advise students of any recommendations already reported to or going forward to the Progress Committee or Faculty Board regarding any failure; investigate whether there were any extenuating circumstances not previously known, and advise them of their right to make representations. Faculty Offices will arrange, in appropriate cases, for this advice to be communicated in writing to the student, stating clearly the date by which they should make representations either in writing or in a personal interview with designated staff.

(i) Arrangements should be made by departments to send examination results to any students who have provided a stamped addressed envelope for the purpose.

(ii) Students are provided with official transcripts of their marks by the Faculty Office on request. Students may be provided with up to one free transcripts within a year of their graduation. Subsequently, a charge will be applied for the provision of transcripts.

## 5.11 Late Submission or Failure to Submit Work for Assessment

5.11.1 Students should be aware of the existence of penalties for not meeting deadlines. These should be clearly specified in writing to students and staff at the beginning of the programme and unit.

5.11.2 The Board of Studies in various departmental or Head of Department with his/her

programme Leaders shall be responsible for setting deadlines for the submission of items of coursework.

5.11.3 Candidates shall be required to submit work for assessment by the deadlines which shall have been notified to them.

(i) *Students* - Coursework deadlines are set by Programme Leader. Failure to meet a deadline results in the loss of 10% of the marks for the piece of work concerned. Work handed in more than a week after a deadline will not ordinarily be marked. Programme Leader check with a student's Society Mentor when an appeal is made on the basis of unavoidable absence through ill health etc.

(ii) *Staff* - Coursework must be returned to students as soon as possible and in no case later than three weeks after the submission deadline.

5.11.4 In the case of late or non-submission of work without reasonable cause, candidates will forfeit that proportion of the total marks for the course represented by the extended essay or dissertation.

5.11.5 In the case of failure to submit required work in accordance with 5.11.3 above, a mark of zero will be recorded for that work. Where the work is later submitted, and a concessionary plea is made, the Chair of the Board of Examiners shall decide whether a **prima facie** case exists and, if he/she so decides, the work shall be marked in the normal manner. The Board of Examiners shall decide, in accordance with its usual concessionary procedures, what use to make of such a mark.

5.11.6 If a student provides evidence of illness or other misfortune which prevented the submission of written work by the due date, the Board of Studies (Departmental Board) and Faculty Board may extend the period of time for submission of the work by so long as it thinks fit.

5.11.7 Where a student has failed to complete all assessment requirements for a course, for example by failing to attend an examination or failing to submit required work, but claims that this was due to illness or other mitigating circumstances, the Board of Examiners may adjust the student's overall mark for the course provided that it is satisfied that the adjusted mark properly represents the student's achievement in the course as a whole and that the student has submitted written medical or other evidence to substantiate any claim of illness or other mitigating circumstances. Marks will be adjusted normally according to objective criteria such as the exclusion of the piece or pieces of assessment affected by the illness or other mitigating circumstances from the calculation of the final course mark.

## **6. Double Marking Policy**

### 6.1 General Policy Statement

All summative assessments for undergraduate and postgraduate stages courses to be double marked on a sampling basis, the sample size being either the square root of the total number of students (rounded to the nearest whole number) taking the assessment or 10 students, whichever is the greater.

## 6.2 Objective

The main objective of double marking is primarily to confirm that the level of marks and the feedback are appropriate, ensuring that marking is fair, valid, reliable and consistent and that the standards applied are appropriate for the level assessed.

## 6.2 Implementation of Policy

6.2.1 The policy statement in 6.1 above, represents the minimum expected within the University. Schools that already undertake a greater proportion of double marking should continue at the same level. Schools and Course/Programme Management Teams that wish to carry out more extensive double marking are encouraged to do so and to work towards second marking of all 300-400 Level stage scripts in the future.

## 6.3 General Principles

6.3.1 Given that we have limited resources and time scale in which to work, we cannot double-mark every piece of assessed work and cannot guarantee that no mistakes are ever made in marking. The process, therefore, is one of moderation.

6.3.2 Since double-marking inevitably adds to the pressures of various examination marking, the university double marking policy will, until further notice, concentrate on double marking only end of semester examinations and dissertations. The University also requires markers to return marked work within 3 weeks.

6.3.3 Electronically marked assignments do not fall within this system and therefore be carefully checked at moderation.

6.3.4 Normally, a course is taught by only one lecturer, therefore in addition to the course lecturer as a marker, a second marker will be appointed by the Programme Leader or the Head of Department and will normally be the internal moderator.

## 6.4 Project courses

All projects must be double-marked. Presentations must be made to a minimum of two members of staff.

## 6.5 Team taught courses

6.5.1 Course lecturer must ensure that for each marker a sample is double-marked by someone in the team.

6.5.2 Sets of scripts will need to be kept separate at this stage and ideally the average mark for each marker would also be reviewed. The course lecturer's or course team must agree whether the marks need changes or not. (A team member may be double-marking the course lecturer's marking.) If disagreements are not resolved the Programme Leaders must be informed and must make the final decision.

## 6.6 Solo courses

6.6.1 Normally, the only person other than the course leader who can reasonably be expected to double-mark is the internal moderator who approves the assignment or examination and hence should have some idea what is, or is not, an appropriate standard. By

doing the double-marking internal moderators will improve their knowledge of the course and hence the usefulness of their moderation. However, Programme Leaders in association with Heads of Department will appoint the second markers.

6.6.2 The course lecturer should select a sample of the scripts (as identified above) and give them, together with a copy of the double-marking form listing the student numbers of the sample, a copy of the assignment and detailed assessment criteria or mark scheme, to the second marker. Either the second marker agrees that the marks (and feedback for coursework) are satisfactory and signs the form or the course lecturer and second marker must meet and discuss their differences and reach agreement. If no agreement is reached, the Programme Leaders or Head of Department must be informed and must arbitrate.

## 6.7 Other

Courses, which do not fit precisely into any of these categories, should be double-marked with common-sense applied to the precise method but within the general principles stated above. (If in doubt, consult Programme Leaders.

## 6.8 Role of the second marker

6.8.1 The sampled scripts should be checked taking account of:

- (i) whether the marking corresponds to the criteria stated to the student
- (ii) whether the marking corresponds to the detailed marking criteria or mark scheme. (It is necessary that these are written down and given to the second marker
- (iii) does the resulting total mark seem appropriate. In particular does a first class mark reflect first class quality? Does a bare pass achieve a quality that has met the assessment criteria adequately?
- (iv) on coursework, is the feedback helpful and sufficient for the individual student to know what was well done and what was poorly done?

6.8.2 It is necessary to record that the double-marking has taken place and its outcome. Comments on the marking should be written on the form for coursework and **NOT ON THE SCRIPT**.

## 6.9 Sampling Methodology

6.9.1 The sample of work to be double marked must be selected after first marking has been completed.

6.9.2 A stratified random sampling methodology can be adopted by Schools that wish to ensure a range of scripts is marked. The sample should represent different levels of student attainment (for example, stratification by grade/ mark).

6.9.3 From any one marker approximately 10% of the scripts should be double-marked subject to a minimum of 5 scripts and a maximum of 10. This sample should be chosen by the course leader after the first marker completes the marking and should include a high mark (first if available), a clear fail and several around the 40% mark. It may be preferable to use around 35% if the course has only one coursework.

## 6.10 Identification and Resolution of Marking Inconsistencies

6.10.1 Where significant disagreements are identified between first and second markers, these two people must meet to discuss these disagreements. Marking inconsistencies might constitute: differences in recommended mark. For second marking undertaken on a sampling basis where agreement is reached between first and second markers regarding the nature of the marking inconsistencies, then the first marker must amend/adjust marks/grades on all scripts accordingly.

6.10.2 Where no agreement can be reached between first and second markers, on the reasons for marking discrepancies, a third party should mark the work and adjudicate. The third person must have appropriate subject expertise and standing, i.e. Programme Leader. The third marker should meet with the first and second markers before reaching a final decision. The decision of the third marker is final.

6.10.3 If the third marker finds the first marking to have been valid then no further action is required of the first marker. If the third marker identifies problems with the first marking, then the first marker must amend/adjust marks/grades on all scripts accordingly.

6.10.4 Where second marking has been applied to all scripts, rather than a sample, resolution should be on a case by case basis, involving a third party, as above, when agreement cannot be reached by the first and second markers.

## 6.11 Possible Actions on Changes of Marks

6.11.1 If marks are to be changed then either

(i) the internal marks are changed and the total is changed – or

(ii) if a whole subset of scripts is to have the mark increased or decreased, the total mark may be changed with a clear crossing out and a new mark and the comment ‘changed at moderation’, or some such phrase, added.

6.11.2 If the second marker has serious reservations about any of the above, the first and second markers must meet and they are expected to come to an agreement about whether changes are needed and if so what changes. Arbitrary averaging of conflicting marks is not enough as the problem identified may well affect a whole set of marks. Obviously a larger sample may be reviewed at this stage. If no agreement is reached or if either person is still seriously concerned, the matter must be referred to the Programme Leader.

6.11.3 None of the scripts for the course can go back to the students until second marking is complete. There will be major problems if scripts are returned and then changes are needed to all or a subset of the marks (or worse, a complete re-marking is required).

6.11.4 After full agreement has been reached, when the scripts are ready to hand back to students, the double-marking forms should be completed.

## 6.12 Documenting Double Marking Practice

6.12.1 The first, second (or double) and third party (when required) markers must be

provided with all requisite documentation relating to the summative assessment, i.e. the brief and any guidance the students received; marking guidelines, criteria, scheme, model answer etc. (which must be approved by the External Examiner); and the Course Descriptor which shows which outcomes are being assessed by the instrument of assessment. Ideally, a pre-meeting for all those involved in marking should be held in order for a common understanding to be reached regarding marking criteria/strategy.

6.12.2 Detailed records should be kept regarding:

- (i) the marks and comments of all markers;
- (ii) the resolution of disagreements;
- (iii) concerns regarding marking practice and remedial mechanisms adopted.

This information should be appropriately monitored at School level.

6.13 Operational details

6.13.1 After the double-marking process has been completed the scripts, marks sheet and double marking form should be handed in to the programme leader. A sample of coursework scripts for all courses will be photocopied for the external examiner. The coursework scripts will then be distributed from administration. If academic staff wish to distribute coursework scripts themselves they should either indicate that they would like to receive the scripts back after copying etc has been done or copy a sample themselves and ensure that copies, marks sheet and double marking form are with the programme assistants within the four week deadline.

6.13.2 If academic staff do choose to distribute coursework themselves then they **must** use a process which ensures that the right person, and only the right person, receives the coursework. The process must include, after a reasonable length of time, returning uncollected scripts to administration.

## **7. Moderation Policy**

7.1 Schools in Regent Ghana are required to develop good internal moderation procedures. Each School will establish and agree its own moderation policy, which must meet the minimum requirements set out below, and this will be endorsed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs. As a University Policy it needs to be incorporated into the practices of collaborative programmes, which may require changes to existing Practice and Operations Manuals.

7.1.1 In order to improve our confidence in the marking of papers and to meet the requirements of the University Academic Standards Code of Practice, Regent Ghana has in place a system of academic moderation by sampling. Academic moderation will apply to all Penultimate year (300 level) and Final year (400 Level) papers, and to first and second year papers being marked by inexperienced staff.

- 7.7.2 Wherever possible academic moderators will be staff who do not have a large marking load in the relevant exam period.
- 7.7.3 To ensure the accuracy and consistency of marking, moderation should normally be undertaken by experienced examiners.
- 7.7.4 The moderator will vouch for the accuracy and consistency of marking. Where he or she cannot, the matter will be referred to the Chair of the Board of Examiners concerned. The Chair will arrange for all the work to be double-marked, normally by the moderator, but, where the Chair deems there to be good reason, by a third party. Where differences of opinion between the first and second-marker cannot in this circumstance be resolved, recourse should be made to the External Examiner.
- 7.7.5 When returning course marks, the Departmental Exams officer should inform the Board of Examiners who the moderator was and that agreement was reached for each assessment.
- 7.7.6 Samples of work, including coursework, for only Final Year (400 level) undergraduate courses and all postgraduate courses may be made available to the External Examiner in the subject as part of the regular examining procedure.

## 7.2 Internal Moderation

- 7.2.1 Staff should consult appropriate peers when setting assessment tasks (including examination questions) and when deciding how to grade student responses to assessment tasks.
- 7.2.2 Where two or more staff (including tutors) share the marking of an assignment or examination question, these activities must be moderated for consistency of standards and quality of feedback provided.
- 7.2.3 Where students are offered a choice of examination questions, the marks awarded for the different options must be compared and adjustments made if necessary to allow for variations in question difficulty.
- 7.2.4 Departments/Schools should review the distributions of grades in courses at each year level, making adjustments where necessary.

## 7.3 External Moderation and Accreditation

- 7.3.1 Departments/Schools must regularly undertake external moderation of their courses. External moderation of 300 - 400 level and all postgraduate courses is also encouraged.
- 7.3.2 In cases where professional courses are subject to moderation of assessment by external bodies, assessment must also comply with the requirements of these bodies.

## 7.4 Dissertations

Theses are blind double-marked by the supervisor and another assessor. After assigning marks the two assessors agree the final mark to be awarded. If they cannot agree, the dissertation is assessed by a third assessor.

## 7.5 Examinations

7.5.1 Where there are a number of experienced staff involved in marking exam scripts for a particular course, the ideal form of moderation consists of a moderation meeting in which a sample of scripts are reviewed and preferably second marked. Provided no significant inconsistencies are identified the agreed marks can then be submitted. A short record of the meeting should be kept and enclosed with the information sent to the external examiner where necessary.

7.5.2 Where all the exam scripts for the course are marked by one assessor, or the assessment team are inexperienced, a sample of the work should be double marked (or if that is not possible, second marked) by a second experienced assessor. If the assessors cannot agree individual marks, it may be necessary to make use of a further assessor. The external examiner should be informed which scripts have been double- or second-marked.

7.5.3 It is recognised that timescales are very short for moderating undergraduate exams before the marks need to be submitted. If there is insufficient time to complete the moderation process at this stage, the un-moderated marks should be submitted and the moderation carried out before the Semester Examination Committee Meeting, at which the outcome of moderation should be reported.

## 7.6 Written Coursework

In the case of any single item of coursework which contributes 40% of the course mark, there should be a moderation process, the form of which will depend on the nature of the teaching team as outlined for examinations above. For items which contribute less than 40% to the final mark, there does not have to be a moderation process.

## 7.7 Other Forms of Assessment

For other forms of assessment, *e.g.* oral examinations, presentations, or recitals, which contribute 40% or more of the module mark, there should normally be the involvement of at least 2 assessors, who should agree the final mark for each piece of work. The external examiner should have access to the agreed comments of the assessors, which should be available as feedback to the student.

## 7.8 Size of Sample

The sample of work to be moderated by the above mechanisms should normally consist of a selection of items from across the range of marks of sufficient size to judge the validity and reliability of the marking (normally not less than 10%). For courses with relatively small numbers of students, the sample should not normally be less than the work of 5 students and should contain at least one example of each grade, if available. For courses with very large numbers of students (*e.g.* more than 250) a sample of 25-30 will normally be sufficient.

## 7.9 Re-marking

Where there is clear evidence during the moderation process, from the sample selected, that there are serious discrepancies in the marks being awarded to a particular piece of work, the

school should arrange for all the items affected to be remarked. This must be reported to the examination committee.

#### 7.10 Role of External Examiner

The size of the sample of assessed work to be reviewed by the external examiner(s) should be agreed with them at the start of the course. It must be emphasized that their role is to gauge the overall standard of the students' performance on the course and to monitor the effectiveness of the assessment process, but not to act as another assessor in cases where the internal assessors cannot agree a mark or to suggest changes to individual assessments on the basis of the sample they receive. If the case is made that the overall marking of an assignment (including exams) needs further moderation, then all the marks for that course should be moderated using a mechanism agreed by the examination committee.

#### 7.11 Examination and Assignment Moderation

7.11.1 External Exam moderation is applied to all Penultimate year (300 level) and Final year (400 Level) papers. However, internal moderation is applied to all first and second year papers being marked by staff who are below the rank of Assistant professor/ Senior lecturer.

7.11.2 The lecturer must provide the name of his/her internal moderator when handing in the examinations questions – this internal moderator can be any member of the academic staff except those with whom the lecturer shares the setting of the exam. The moderator will be asked to proof read and approve the content/standard of the questions.

7.11.3 Departments should determine whether students should be required to submit two copies of written coursework assignments.

#### 7.11 Answer Scripts Moderation

7.12.1 *Moderation of assessed work, including exam scripts:* Unless assessed work is double-marked, marks should be moderated by a second marker (often, an external examiner). The first marker, the lecturer of the course, should use sufficient annotation on the work to make clear the reasoning behind the mark awarded.

7.12.2 The basis for the moderator's assessment of the accuracy and consistency of marking will be the departmental/subject criteria for assessment alongside the detail of the learning objectives of the assessment modes contained in the course descriptor.

7.12.3 Departments may determine that 'borderline' pieces of work should be included in the samples of work to be seen by moderators where the term 'borderline' is meaningful in relation to a particular piece of work.

7.12.4 Academic moderators will be as far as possible staff capable of interpreting the answer scripts and the marking scheme for the papers concerned. A sample of the answer scripts will be taken comprising:

- (i) All the scripts if the total number is less than 10.

(ii) 10 papers if the total number is 10-100.

(iii) 10% otherwise.

7.12.5 The sample should represent a reasonable distribution of marks including a script with top marks and one with poor marks but representing a reasonable attempt at the paper (i.e. not a paper with less than 10%).

7.12.6 The question setter or first marker will supply the moderator with a detailed marking scheme showing the breakdown of the marks allocation. Ideally this will be sufficiently detailed to see how individual marks are allocated. If the marking scheme is modified or refined during the marking process it will be the marking scheme actually used for the marking.

7.12.7 The moderator will check that the marking of the sample is consistent with the marking scheme. The moderator will initial every question on the papers checked in this way. The moderator will sign the front cover of the script. If any mark is changed as a result of this moderation process, then all the scripts will be moderated, not necessarily by the original moderator. This will effectively be a non-blind double marking of the papers or a selected question if a problem relates to a specific question. As many staff will be used as necessary to complete this moderation in time.

7.12.8 The moderator will complete the moderation within 24 hours.

7.12.9 If the moderator identifies any discrepancy of more than 2/20 in any question or more than 5% (e.g. 3/60) in the paper overall then this will be brought to the attention of the Departmental Exams officer. If on further investigation the marker, the moderator and the exams officer agree that original mark stands no further action need be taken. It is open to first markers to seek advice from the moderator on the marking of work by particular candidates.

## **8. Notifying Students of Assessment Policy and Procedures**

8.1 In each course, students must receive specific, clear and early information about course assessment requirements, e.g. due date, weighting, length, presentation. If it is not prudent to provide this information in the Course Outline, it should be provided in a separate assignment handout.

8.2 If minimum levels of attendance or completion of practical or other specified work are required before a final examination can be sat, or a course grade awarded, these requirements should be detailed in course information. There should be a clear rationale for such requirements and they should be communicated clearly to all students to whom they apply.

8.3 Students should be notified of University assessment policies and Department/School practices and procedures. To this end, Departments/Schools will provide the following information in a timely manner to students and staff through notification in Handbooks, Course Outlines, web pages or any other appropriate means, e.g. noticeboards, handouts:

8.3.1 Department/School

- (i) Grading practices including the grading scale, explanation of grading criteria, scaling of marks and grades, and moderation
- (ii) Policy on the granting of extensions of time for submitting assessed work
- (iii) Penalties imposed for the late submission of work.

#### 8.3.2 University

- (i) Provisions for reconsideration of grades
- (ii) Appeal provisions
- (iii) Provisions for students with disabilities, particularly in relation to the sitting of tests and exams
- (iv) Expectations regarding academic integrity, especially in relation to plagiarism and including procedures in the event that dishonest academic practice is suspected.